

A lot has changed in Iraq. It has been 3 years since the Saddam Hussein regime fell. It has been 2 years since an interim government was formed and the sovereignty of Iraq was transferred to that interim government. It has been 15 months since the first elections in Iraq. Iraq has a new constitution. They have elected a permanent government.

In December of 2005 we went on record in the defense authorization bill that 2006 should be a year of transition in which the Iraqi security forces take control of their own security. That has not happened.

It is time to change the policies in Iraq, and yet the President still says let's stay the course. We need a new direction in Iraq. That direction should include the drawdown of American troops. We have 130,000 soldiers serving in Iraq. 20 percent are from our National Guard and Reservists. Military experts have recommended a drawdown of 10,000 troops a month.

Although we should not announce a specific time schedule, it is reasonable to expect that one-half of our combat troops could be home by the end of 2006, and all of our combat troops home by the end of 2007. It should start with our National Guard. They were never intended to be the primary coverage for a military operation. We need them home to meet local needs.

This would allow us to achieve certain necessary objectives, bringing our troops home to their families and not in the middle of a civil war. It is an important message to the Iraqi government that they cannot assume that American soldiers will be there indefinitely to take care of their own security needs. It would remove propaganda for al Qaeda in which they look at the United States as being an occupation force, and it allows us to stage outside of Iraq to work with our allies and international community to fight international terrorism. We have lost our focus in the war against terror. It would help us preserve an all-volunteer military.

We also need to organize an international conference, including the Iraqi government and our friends internationally. The United States is the only superpower. We need to mend our diplomatic fences. We need to engage the international community. It is in their interest to help us in Iraq, to create a ceasefire for the Iraqi government and its militia, train the security forces, and coordinate humanitarian aid and infrastructure assistance.

We need to honor our commitment to our military veteran families and strengthen troop recruitment. The voluntary military is in danger because of excessive deployments. Morale is down because of long tours of duty and our failure to live up to our commitments on veterans' benefits.

The recruitment goal in 2005 was missed by 6,000, and our National Guard and Reservists have only hit 80 percent of their goal. The answer is the

proper deployment of our military and honoring our veterans, commitments on benefits, including health benefits, so that the 18,000 who are returning injured from Iraq and the 50,000 who we anticipate will have battle fatigue related issues are dealt with as we have promised.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon the President to change course in Iraq in order to further U.S. interests.

FISCAL RESTRAINT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing joke here in Washington that the Democrats have no agenda. It is a joke, Mr. Speaker, and it would be very funny if it were not so true. There are ongoing press reports, just this week there is a press report that the Democrats planned to roll out their agenda this week. Well, it is funny because they decided not to. Well, it is also funny because this is a press report that goes back since November of last year. They keep having these press reports that say we are going to roll out our agenda next week. The next week comes and goes, and no Democrat agenda.

It is an amazing thing that such a formerly great party with such high ideals and strong agenda can't even get together an election-year agenda. It is an amazing thing to me as a conservative who has an agenda, who is a member of a party who has an agenda. It is a wonderful thing that the party leadership won't come together. The party leadership won't come together and issue an agenda.

Now I know there are some on the other side of the aisle that have high ideals and have an agenda, but the Democratic leadership in Washington won't come together and issue an agenda. I am hopeful they will because I think what their agenda will show, when they do issue their agenda, it will show two things: Waving the white flag on the war against Islamic extremists and raising taxes. It is a two-part agenda, and I am going to boil it down to those two things.

They are going to wave the white flag and say this war is not worth fighting, let's bring all of our servicemen home. Let's just work with terrorist attacks on our home soil rather than taking the fight to the enemy wherever they are.

The second part of that is big government. How do you have big government, Mr. Speaker? You have big government by having big taxes, by taking more out of the economy and bring it here to Washington, D.C., by taxing people more wherever they are in this Nation, Mr. Speaker, by taxing them more, and bringing that money here to Washington and running programs out of Washington.

Big government liberalism is still at the heart of the Democratic Party, and that is something that is very out of step with what the American people want.

Let's talk about what the Republicans have done and what our conservative leadership here in Washington has done. Just in the last 33 months, we have had wonderful job growth across this Nation. Within the last 3 years, we have had 5.3 million new jobs. Why? Because we have restrained spending in Washington. Well, not as much as I would like as a conservative, but we have been able to restrain spending here in Washington, and excessive growth of government. And we have been able to pass tax cuts that let Americans keep more of what they earn.

Those two things have led to this wonderful job creation, and that is why this House continued to pass tax cuts every year since we have taken the majority as Republicans. Every year we have passed tax cuts since 1995. And those results that we have shown the American people have led to the economy expanding.

Moreover, when the economy expands and people have jobs through these lower taxes, through conservative fiscal policy, you know what happens? As they make more money, they pay more taxes. The Federal Government gets more revenue when people are working, Mr. Speaker.

These things work, and the American people know it and they are benefiting from the prosperity that through conservative fiscal policy, we have helped lead the Nation in this right direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a very severe contrast between the two ideologies that underpin the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. They are two disparate views of the world and how we defend our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we should have this great debate, not just on the war, which we have had for the last 10 hours on the House floor, but we should also have a debate about fiscal policy.

As a conservative, I don't believe we have done enough in terms of fiscal policy, but we are making progress and that progress is getting real results. That is a wonderful agenda for a conservative party to stand for. Now we look forward to our opposition on the other side of the aisle to one day to come up with an agenda.

REDEPLOY OUR TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, we were promised another chance to debate our policies with respect to the war in Iraq. Yesterday and today we had that debate. But those who listened to that debate need to understand that it was mere theater.

We had before us today a resolution that could only be voted up or down,